

Lyme Town Forest

Lyme, New Hampshire



illustration c. Joan Waltermire

The 382-acre tract includes a 1985 acquisition from the Seigney Company, and an addition purchased in 2002 with proceeds from timber sales. The terrain varies from wetlands to ledge outcrops, with elevations ranging from 780 to 1220 feet. Whipple Brook gathers its drainage, sending it into Trout Brook and Post Pond, then to Clay Brook and on into the Connecticut River. Mud Turtle Pond Road, a Class VI road linking Whipple Hill Road with Orford's Strawberry Hill, bisects the Forest. The Lyme Town Forest is a certified NH Tree Farm.

History

As in much of Lyme, homesteaders pushed back the forest for farming here in the early 1800s. Look for lilacs and apple trees lingering near cellar holes on Mud Turtle Pond Road by the Beaver Pond Trail. While these families probably occupied the land no more than 70 years, the barn foundations, stone walls, and barbed wire fences they left behind testify to a farming life. The forest which returned was old enough to be cut 65-75 years ago, and the present forest, except for a few old-timer tree survivors, is a result of that cutting.

Wildlife

The Lyme Town Forest's impressive array of habitat types provides suitable homes for an equal diversity of wildlife. Otter, mink, and beaver frequent the wetlands, with fisher, weasel, deer, porcupine, raccoon, snowshoe hare, woodchuck, skunk, and red fox on drier soil. Amphibians, such as salamanders and frogs,

breed in the vernal pools which vanish in summer and so are free from predatory fish. Woodcock, wild turkey and grouse, hawks and owls, and a variety of songbirds round out the bird list. Moose, black bear, and bobcat also pay an occasional visit to find food, cover, and water in the forest.

Forest Management

Lyme's Conservation Commission worked with O'Brien Forestry Services in 1996 to create a forest management plan for the Town Forest. Well rooted in the principles of sustainable forest management, its goal is to shift the forest from its present even-aged structure to a variety of age classes and habitat types, to offer more diverse wildlife habitat and protection from disease. The forest plan also sets aside a reserve area for old growth habitat, which will be allowed to develop naturally with no disturbance except for low-impact recreation and interpretive trails. Riparian buffers along streams and wetlands will also remain undisturbed, to provide habitat and protect water quality in Whipple Brook.

An initial cutting in 1996-7 removed low quality trees and those with little value to wildlife. Skid trails and log landings were designed with an eye to their future use as trails or wildlife openings. For his Boy Scout Eagle project, John Gamble led a team to improve rough sections of trail.

Please...

Muscle-powered travel only. No motorized vehicles. Dogs are welcome if they are under the control of their owners. Leave flowers and other plants growing where you found them. And please, carry out what you carry in.

Directions

From Lyme Common, travel 1.6 miles north on Route 10. Turn right onto Pinnacle Road. In 1.6 miles turn left onto Orfordville Road. Look for the large blue sign marking the Town Forest parking area, on the left in 0.8 miles. The trail starts here. Trails are marked with aluminum and orange disks.



